GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2621
ANSWERED ON:01.12.2016
Encroachments of Water Bodies
Somaiya Dr. Kirit

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that many water bodies in the country have been encroached upon and filled up by land mafias for building houses, if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(b) whether certain Committees including Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources has expressed deep concerns on the pathetic state of water bodies in the country including National Capital Territory of Delhi, if so, the details and the facts thereof;

(c) whether lack of existing laws and poor maintenance of land records is resulting in such encroachments; and

(d) if so, the action plan of the Government to check the said encroachments and save water bodies in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION

(DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a)to (d) Works related to water resources development & management are planned, funded, executed and maintained by the State Governments themselves as per their own resources and priorities. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, Government of India provides technical and financial assistance to State Governments to encourage sustainable development and efficient management of water resources through various schemes and programmes such as scheme for Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of water bodies etc. Matter related to encroachment on water bodies comes under purview of the concerned State Govts.
Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation conducts minor irrigation census. As per the 4th Minor Irrigation Census, about 80128 water bodies are not in use because of encroachments, urbanization, polluted water, non availability of water due to less and erratic rainfall, siltation, etc.

In this context, it is to mention that water bodies included under RRR of water bodies schemes are encroachment free. However, considering the importance of water bodies for socio economic development and sustainable water security to the local population, Secretary (MoWR, RD & GR) vide letter dated 26.02.2016 requested State Governments to take necessary steps for keeping all the water bodies encroachment free throughout the country. Further, Secretary (WR, RD & GR) vide letter dated 07.11.2016 requested the State Governments to take appropriate action in respect of inclusion of water bodies in land records, inclusion of water bodies as integral part of town planning process, strict action for the encroachers, etc.

Standing Committee on Water Resources, in its 10th report on 'Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies- Encroachment on Water Bodies And Steps Required to Remove the Encroachment and Restore the Water Bodies', has raised the concern on the issue of encroachment on water bodies besides other issues. The Committee also recommended for issue of model directives/guidelines on encroachment aspect based on the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court and High Courts in the country. In this context, 'Draft Guidelines for Conservation and Protection of Water Bodies' have been prepared and circulated to the concerned Central Ministries and State/UTs.

*****